

Please replace the following section beginning on page 31, line 1, with the following section which is marked-up to indicate the changes:

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### ABSTRACT

A2  
Methods ~~A method~~ and apparatus for forwarding packets including ~~fixed length cells~~ in a multistage interconnection network are provided which ~~are based on timestamping~~ timestamp packets using a substantially system-wide timing reference and a ~~novel application~~ of merge sorting variant to restore packets to the proper order, using the timestamp information carried in the packets. ~~A feature of the invention is a method for determining~~ One implementation determines when packets passing along different paths in the network can be safely forwarded, even when no packets have recently been received on some of the ~~paths~~. ~~This is done using a mechanism that forwards paths, by forwarding status messages along otherwise idle paths, where the paths.~~ The status messages provide information that can be used by downstream components to allow them to determine when packets passing over other paths can safely be forwarded. ~~The invention~~ One implementation simultaneously resequences packets being delivered to all  $n$  outputs of the multistage interconnection network. The resequencing operations are distributed among a plurality of switching elements making up the interconnection network. ~~Sorting of packets can be accomplished by a plurality of switch elements thereby resequencing ordered sets of packets in a plurality of source buffers into ordered sets of packets in a plurality of destination buffers.~~

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